

Recipe

Turkish Lentil Soup (Mercimek Çorbası)

Complex layers of earth and acid. Ready in 40 mins.

Here are 5 different ways to view the execution of this recipe. Choose the one that fits your cooking style best.

Format 1: The “Mise-en-place” & Execution Flow

Best for: Ensuring you have everything ready before you start the heat.

Mise-en-place (Main & Side):

- **The Main (Soup) Prep:**
 - Rinse 1 cup Red Lentils.
 - Dice 1 medium Yellow Onion.
 - Peel/Chop 2-3 Carrots.
 - Small dice 1 Russet Potato.
 - Mince 2-3 cloves Garlic.
- **The Flavor Bomb (Soup):** 2 tbsp Tomato Paste, 1 tsp Cumin, 1/2 tsp Coriander, 2 tsp Aleppo Pepper.
- **The Liquids (Soup):** 6 cups Vegetable Broth.
- **The Side (Shirazi Salad) Prep:**
 - Dice 4-5 Persian Cucumbers.
 - Dice 4-5 Tomatoes.
 - Mince 1/2 Red Onion.
 - Chop 1/2 cup Mint.
 - Squeeze Juice of 2 Limes.

Execution (Interleaved):

1. **Start Soup Base:** Heat oil in large pot. Sweat onion, garlic, carrots, potato (7m).
2. **Bloom:** Add tomato paste and spice blend to pot. Cook until fragrant (2m).
3. **Simmer Main:** Add broth and lentils. Bring to boil, then cover and simmer low (20m).
4. **Make Side (While Simmering):** While soup bubbles, mix cucumbers, tomatoes, onion, mint, lime juice, and oil in a bowl. Salt to taste. Set aside.
5. **Finish Main:** Blend soup until smooth.
6. **Sizzle Garnish:** Quickly heat oil and remaining Aleppo pepper in small pan.

7. **Serve:** Ladle soup (drizzle with chili oil + lemon squeeze) alongside the fresh salad.
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Format 2: The “Flavor Layers” (Step-by-Step Build)

Best for: Understanding the sequential build-up of flavors.

1. **SWEET & EARTHY Base (Main):** The onions, carrots, and potatoes provide a sweet vegetable foundation, while the red lentils add the earthy protein backbone.
 2. **BLOOMED SPICE Layer (Main):** Frying the tomato paste and spices (cumin/coriander) in oil unlocks fat-soluble flavors that boiling water alone cannot release.
 3. **CREAMY TEXTURE Layer (Main):** Blending the cooked potato and lentils creates a natural, dairy-free creaminess that coats the palate.
 4. **BRIGHT ACID Punch (Side & Finish):** The lime juice in the salad and fresh lemon squeeze in the soup cut through the starchy thickness, creating a palate-cleansing effect between bites.
 5. **SPICY FAT Finish (Garnish):** The chili-infused oil dribbled on top provides heat and a rich mouthfeel contrast to the acidic soup.
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Format 3: The “Chef’s Shorthand” (Tactical)

Best for: Quick glances while cooking.

- **Prep** soup veg (dice).
- **Sweat** mirepoix in pot (7m).
- **Bloom** paste + spices (2m).
- **Simmer** w/ broth + lentils (20m).
- **Make Side:** Chop salad veg & toss w/ dressing while soup cooks.

- **Blend** soup smooth.
- **Sizzle** chili oil.
- **Assemble:** Soup w/ garnish + Side Salad.

Format 4: The “Timeline” (Parallel Processor)

Best for: Optimization and multi-tasking.

Time	Action	Notes
T-0:40	Prep	Rinse lentils, dice soup veg.
T-0:30	Cook Main	Sweat onions/ carrots/potatoes.
T-0:23	Spices	Add paste/ spices. Bloom 2m.
T-0:21	Simmer	Add broth/lentils. Cover. Timer: 20m.
T-0:20	Side Prep	Chop cucumbers, tomatoes, onion for salad.
T-0:10	Side Toss	Mix salad with lime juice/oil. Set table.
T-0:05	Finish Main	Blend soup. Heat chili oil garnish.
T-0:00	Serve	

Time	Action	Notes
		Hot Soup + Cold Salad.

Format 5: The “Sensory Script” (Audio-Visual)

Best for: Cooking by feel and intuition.

- **SMELL:** The kitchen should smell warm and toasted (cumin) when the spices hit the oil for the soup.
- **LOOK (Side):** The salad should glisten with lime juice; the colors should be jewel-like red and green.
- **SOUND:** The quiet bubble of the soup simmer is replaced by the aggressive “whirrr” of the immersion blender.
- **TOUCH:** The lentils in the soup should be completely disintegrated; the potato soft enough to mash.
- **TASTE:** The soup is heavy and earthy; the salad provides a sharp, crunchy “snap” that wakes up your tongue.

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- **The Catch:** Before blending the soup, fish out several chunks of potato and carrot. Serve these “nuggets” plain with a side of cheese toast or pita bread.
- **The Side:** Serve cucumber slices plain (pre-dressing).